

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
January 8, 2013**

Voting Members

Aurelio Baca-Asher

Joe Dixon

Tiffany Gee (Chair)

Campbell Graeb

Allison Lazare (Vice Chair)

Ann F. Lewis

John Mertens

R. Mallory Starr

The JBG Companies

GEICO

Chevy Chase Land Company

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

United Educators Insurance

Friendship Heights Village

Friendship Heights Village

Somerset House Management Association

Non-voting Members

Vacant

M-NCPPC

TMD Staff

Nakengi Byrd

Jim Carlson

Sheila Wilson

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

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Absent

Sandra L. Brecher

-Representing DOT Director

James Calderwood

Capt. David Falcinelli

Kenneth Hartman

Cobey R. Kuff

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers

Montgomery County Police

B-CC Services Center

Wisconsin Place

Guests

Barbara Condos

Kelly Peterson

Richard Yates

Town of Somerset

District Dept. of Transportation

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Abbreviations

DDOT = District Dept. of Transportation

MCDOT = Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation

Items 1, 2 & 3 – Introductions/Minutes Approval/Chair’s Comments: Vice Chair **Allison Lazare** called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves. December’s minutes were approved. **Ms. Lazare** welcomed new member **Aurelio Baca-Asher**, The JBG Companies, as a Developer Representative.

Item 4 – Friendship Heights Bus Station Maintenance: **Jim Carlson** said there had been a December meeting between Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MDOT) staff, Metro officials and

Richard Yates of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance to discuss how best to control litter at the Friendship Heights Bus Station. **Mr. Carlson** introduced **Mr. Yates**.

Mr. Yates explained that all the trash on the ground at the bus station and the surrounding streets and ends up in the Little Falls tributary and the Potomac River, eventually emptying into Chesapeake Bay. The litter is an environmental and toxic hazard. He said as a resident it has been a constant battle to clean the area in and around the station, even though there are laws regulating waste disposal. However, there is a lack of enforcement, and no coordination between Metro and the Chevy Chase Land Company on the shared maintenance of the station.

Mr. Yates described conditions in and around the bus station. In addition to the food wrappers, plastic bottles and other litter, there are stacked newspapers left over from the morning rush (and which are supposed to be returned by the individuals distributing them) which get blown around the bus bays and the surrounding streets. In addition to the litter that doesn't get discarded properly in a receptacle, the trash that is thrown away is frequently blown out of the trash receptacles by the wind. He said the latter problem could be remedied by placing lids on the trash cans. *[Metro's Superintendent of Plant Maintenance agreed at the December meeting to supply covers for the trash cans]*

Mr. Yates explained that the station is not cleaned on weekends and does not always appear to receive a thorough daily cleaning, contrasting it to the appearance of the Bethesda Metro which does appear to get a thorough cleaning. He relayed that **Christopher Moore**, Metro's Superintendent, Office of Plant Maintenance, said (during the December meeting) that the Friendship Heights station will achieve the same level of cleanliness over time as Bethesda.

Some of reasons for the lack of cleaning are:

- Traffic safety concerns with curb cut-ins for the buses on Wisconsin and Western: cleaning crews are not to stand in the street.
- Cleaning overlap with Chevy Chase Land Company crew that also cleans early in the mornings followed relatively soon by the Metro crew, leaving the station untended through the afternoons. Porters only clean station before 2:30 pm Monday through Friday and not on weekends.

Mr. Yates said there needed to be a change in Metro's behavior that is responsive to the neighborhood, because trash in the community can cause wider problems such as:

- Property devaluation.
- Negative effect on commerce.
- May attract criminal behavior.
- Attracts vermin.
- Environmental issues – trash washes into the storm drains and into the Little Falls tributary leading to the Potomac, eventually to the Chesapeake Bay.

He explained that the meetings with Metro are the beginning of the process of cleaning the neighborhood and they will have to see how it will progress. In addition to the meetings, he suggested using whatever funds are available in the TMD for cleaning services to cover litter pickup in other public rights of way in addition to the bus terminal.

Mr. Yates explained that property owners of area stores are not required by the County to maintain the public areas in front of their establishments, and he has received various responses from them regarding keeping these areas clean – some willing, some not. **Mr. Yates** said that by stressing the promotion of good will between business owners and the community he can make a strong case for the need to keep public rights of way clean, benefiting everyone.

Campbell Graeb warned against misrepresenting the condition of trash at the bus terminal, stating that he saw only one small piece of litter trash when he passed the station on his way to the meeting, and that he also thought the station was acceptable on previous visits. **Mr. Yates** disagreed, and said he saw much more litter and he had also been there earlier.

Aurelio Baca-Asher commented that Bethesda has much more support from the business community that can help in trash clean up than in Friendship Heights, so the two are not completely comparable.

Mr. Carlson cautioned that the litter problem beyond the confines of the bus station is beyond the scope of the Committee's mission. However, issues such as improper handling of newspapers at the terminal and anything that impacts the cleanliness and safety of the bus station is appropriate for Committee support.

Mr. Yates said that because there are on-going talks with Metro, the Committee does not need to act now but asked that it be ready lend support in some way if needed.

Item 5 – DOT Parking Enforcement Letter: **Mr. Carlson** asked if there were additional items to add to the letter requesting parking meters on Friendship Blvd. **Mr. Yates** said he had earlier been picking up litter dropped by people who were parked along Friendship Boulevard. He suggested that the letter also include a request for litter enforcement. **Mr. Carlson** said that while trying to prevent litter was worthwhile, it diverted the Committee from its primary mission. **Mr. Graeb** asked that the letter include a request for parking enforcement along Willard Avenue, since many of the illegally parked vehicles also use Willard.

VOTE: The Committee voted to approve the letter with changes.

Updates:

- The Annual Commuter Survey process is completed.
- Fiscal Cliff deal has increased transit benefits once again, this time to \$245, achieving parity with the parking benefit.
- Parking rates increased in North Bethesda and Silver Spring-January 1, 2013, from \$113 to \$123 per month.

Mr. Graeb expressed concern about the disrepair of the paving on Western Avenue. The joints are not being maintained and it looks like a washboard. He asked what the Committee could do to influence the District to repair the pavement since it is in their jurisdiction. **Kelly Peterson** from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) said that there is a repaving schedule and will notify the Committee via **Mr. Carlson** as to where the work order is in the queue. The work may be delayed due to scheduled repair of utility projects.

Ms. Peterson announced the District 311 system is being used to benchmark DDOT performance and is the best way to submit a work request. The *Grade DC* program started by **Mayor Vincent Gray** measures the District's agency performance showing improvement over time. The DDOT score has improved from a C- to a B+.

Ms. Peterson other announcements were:

- The Rock Creek West II Livability Study was completed in 2011. The study took a "big picture" look at the street network and identified concrete actions to increase transportation and safety options. DDOT is moving forward on recommendations.
- The website with Inauguration information is active.

- No update regarding Chevy Chase Circle improvements – waiting for a response from the National Park Service to signalize Western Avenue approaches to the Circle. **Ms. Peterson** hopes to have an update in spring.

Mr. Graeb raised some additional concerns to **Ms. Peterson**:

- He requested that DDOT look changing the GEICO traffic light on Western Avenue to a demand actuated signal and removing the crosswalk. The current signal operation is creating traffic congestion during non-work hours by cycling fully, even though GEICO employees are not exiting the parking lot. **Ms. Peterson** said she will look into the signal operation, but that there are specific Federal regulations requiring crosswalks at signals
- The signage on Western Avenue between Jenifer Street and River Road is faded and outdated. **Ms. Peterson** said to take a photo and email to her so she can forward to the appropriate department. **Mr. Carlson** said he would take photos.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 am

Next meeting: February 12, 2013